

MARIPOSA COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA
ACTION FORM

3-11-97
DATE: March 4, 1997
AGENDA ITEM NO.: \$9c

DEPARTMENT: Visitors Bureau BY: Steve Hayes PHONE: 966-2456

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION: (Policy Item: Yes No)
Recommend that the Board consider approval of the emergency enhancement of the County's transit system to promote visitor access to Yosemite National Park during the 1997 summer season beginning on or about May 15th and decreasing on or about September 15th. The county wide transit enhancement may continue as demand continues or until a long term plan is put into place by the County or other entity such as the Yosemite Area Regional Transit Strategy (YARTS.)

Currently the National Park Service is considering implementation of a Day Use Reservation system (DUR) which they have assessed will meet their goals: 1) to protect the resources of Yosemite National Park (YNP); 2) and prevent overcrowding in the Park for the 1997 season. Though the idea of the Day Use Reservation System has been around for a long time there has been little done to make this option workable to this date. The notion that a reservation system that may have to process 2 million transactions for the peak visitors season alone can be in place by the stated date of April 1st, appears to be problematic. (Continued on page #2)

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

The current Mariposa County transit system was approved by the Board of Supervisors on 10/22/94, Resolution #94-504. The resulting three year contract expires on June 30, 1997. The contract provides for month to month continuance through November 1997. The emergency enhancement of the County-wide transit plan before the board has been presented in concept to the Board on 2/25.

LIST ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

- 1) Disapproval of the emergency transit enhancement plan would mean that absent an alternate plan from the Park Service and / or concessionaire the Day Use Reservation System would significantly impact the economy and discretionary revenues available to Mariposa County to provide services to the general residents of Mariposa County.
- 2) Approval of the emergency transit enhancement plan would provide an alternative to the emergency institution of National Park Service Day Use Reservation Plan providing a means for visitors to enter Yosemite National Park that may not otherwise come or be allowed to enter. And in the event the Day Use Reservation system is instituted may be effective as adjusted for that situation.
- 3) No action.

COSTS: Not Applicable

A. Budgeted current FY \$ _____

B. Total anticipated costs \$ _____

C. Required additional funding \$ _____

D. Internal transfers \$ _____

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
List the attachments and number the pages consecutively:

Staff report on plan details which include the anticipated costs and proposed revenue sources.

SOURCE: 4/5ths Vote Required

A. Unanticipated revenues \$ _____

B. Reserve for contingencies \$ _____

C. Source description: _____

Balance in Reserve for Contingencies, if approved: \$ _____

CLERK'S USE ONLY:
RES. NO.: 97.70 Ord. No. _____
Vote - Ayes: _____ Noes: _____
Absent: _____ Abstained: _____
() Approved () Denied
() Minute Order Attached () No action necessary

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION:
This item is on agenda as:

 Recommended
 Not Recommended
 For Policy Determination
 Submitted with Comment

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original on file in this office.
Date: _____
ATTEST: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board
County of Mariposa, State of California
By: _____
Deputy

Comment: _____
A.O. Initials: *JL*

The financial impact of the DUR system on the hospitality industry alone is conservatively estimated at 15-20% because that is the amount of walk-in / non-reserved business that comes to the local lodging businesses. The actual impact to the local economy is considered to be more significant judging by the apparent negative affects of the news about the DUR on the reservations which are typically brisk for this time of year. Currently reservations are close to 37% below last year at this time which was not an exceptional time period. The apparent impact of the DUR on the already impacted economy due to the flood and road closure is staggering with major segments of the hospitality industry reporting that for the calendar year they expect the combined effects to bring them to 50% of normal if everything else goes well. Due to the substantial loses in cash flow, many businesses seeking federal assistance, and requests for forbearance by lenders on their existing debt service it is not feasible for the private sector to bear the costs of the enhancements of the transit system which will be required.


The anticipated cost of the emergency transit enhancement is detailed in the staff report to follow. The use of county funds to support this transit alternative will preserve a potential loss of revenue to Mariposa County that will more than compensate for the expense. Additionally, Mariposa County will be building toward a solution to the Yosemite Area transportation challenges. And further, the importance of encouraging the visitors that have patronized Mariposa County business year after year to continue that much appreciated trend cannot be overstated.

There are other county and regional initiatives that may provide for solutions over the long term. Those groups should be provided with consideration of their plans for the long term. Support of those transit initiatives and support of this emergency short-term transit plan is not mutually exclusive.

Immediate action to provide an alternative to the DUR system is needed because significant domestic and international travel markets will make their travel decisions in the next few weeks. Additionally, the National Park Service has indicated that if a transit plan is not approved on or about this date that they may continue with their plans to implement the DUR. The actual transit system if approved would have to be in place on or about 5/15/97. Mariposa County has the opportunity to provide service to the county, state, nation, and world by providing a means for people who would other wise not be able to visit Yosemite to do so. The details including the estimated costs and revenue sources of the proposed emergency enhancement of the County-wide transit plan before the board is contained in the separate staff report to follow.

MARIPOSA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTE ORDER

TO: STEVE HAYES, VISITORS BUREAU DIRECTOR
FROM: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board 
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY TRANSIT ENHANCEMENT PLAN
Res. No. 97-70

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,

ADOPTED THIS Order on March 4, 1997

ACTION AND VOTE:

11:03 a.m. Steve Hayes, Visitors Bureau Director;

Resolution Authorizing Emergency Transit Enhancement Plan

BOARD ACTION: Lengthy discussion was held concerning this matter and possible funding sources, with services estimated to take place between May 15th and September 15th. Supervisor Parker advised that he and Supervisor Reilly have a meeting scheduled with the Park Service on Wednesday and would like direction from the Board relative to the message to carry to the meeting. Barry Brouillette noted that planning would need to include a wide range from worst case to best case scenario and everything in between relative to visitation, and the County will need to react precisely and with as much finesse as possible and be prepared with staging areas; suggested that the Board go to the table only with the stipulation that the Park will back away from the day use reservation system; and noted that with more preliminary planning, the County will be in a better situation. Curtis Riggs, VIA Adventures, expressed concern that the Park is wanting a transit service but is not giving the basic information necessary to plan for a transit system, and cited an example of not knowing what the entrance fee will be for bus passengers; suggested that perhaps an amount such as \$3.00 of every \$20.00 entrance fee for private vehicles could be used to fund a transit system. Further discussion was held. (M)Pickard, (S)Parker, Res. 97-70 adopted approving emergency enhancement of the County-wide transit plan with the contingency that the day use reservation system approved by the National Park Service is not implemented and that the National Park Service participate in full or in part with the necessary funding and that the County's portion be paid for from the general fund reserve, with flexibility of utilizing whatever funding source may be available to implement the program. Motion was amended, agreeable with maker and second, to include direction that in-house resources be used wherever possible in the transit planning. Following further discussion, motion was further amended, agreeable with maker and second, to include direction for the Board committee (Supervisors Parker and Reilly) to carry to the meeting on Wednesday with the Park Service:

- Yosemite National Park (YNP) would need to expand its internal shuttle service to meet the needs of increased public transit visitors. YNP management staff has promised (2/25/97, Oakhurst public meeting) that YNP would expand their transit service to meet whatever guests an outside transit service would bring;
- Transit revenue would be affected by the National Park Service (NPS) policy on public transit entrance fees;
- Yosemite Concessionaire Services (YCS) would need to provide service equal to County's capacity to move enough passengers at peak demand;
- The question of the availability of the Badger Pass parking lot for use as a staging area needs to be resolved;
- The County needs to know where the Park Service stands relative to the day use reservation system, and if there is a possibility that the system would not be implemented if a viable transit service is provided;
- The County needs to know the details of the day use reservation system that are known thus far;
- The NPS and YCS need to participate in the transit system;
- More information needs to be known relative to the gate fees and the transit fees at the gate;
- More information needs to be known relative to Highway 140 access to Yosemite;
- and
- More information needs to be known relative to restricted private vehicle use.

Gwen Foster/PWD-Civil Engineer, provided input relative to representing the gateway communities when dealing with the Park Service. It was noted that the \$60,000 funding issue will be further addressed next week. Further discussion was held concerning the motion. Motion was further amended, agreeable with maker and second, to approve emergency enhancement of a County-wide transit plan with the contingency that the day use reservation system approved by the National Park Service is not implemented and that the National Park Service participate in full or in part with the necessary funding and that the County's portion be paid for from an undetermined source, with direction that in-house resources be used wherever possible in the transit planning, and with the direction to the Board's committee as previously stated/Ayes: Unanimous.

cc: Supervisor Parker
 Supervisor Reilly
 Janet Hogan, County Administrative Officer
 Jeff Green, County Counsel
 Ed Johnson, LTC Executive Director
 Mike Edwards, Public Works Director
 File